DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 247 410 CE 039 440

AUTHOR Klem, Lynn
TITLE The Soul of a New System. New Jersey Adult Reading Project. F.Y. '80--F.Y. '84. Final Report.
INSTITUTION Glassboro State Coll., NJ. Office of Adult Continuing Education.
SPONS AGENCY New Jersey State Dept. of Education, Trenton. Div. of Adult Education.
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 16p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; *Adult Programs; *Competency Based Education; Educational Needs; Field Tests; Functional Literacy; *Functional Reading; Instructional Development; *Literacy Education; Material Development; Needs Assessment; Program Development; Program Effectiveness; State Programs; Statewide Planning
IDENTIFIERS 310 Project; *New Jersey Adult Reading Project

ABSTRACT

The New Jersey Adult Reading Project was a state project involving more than 500 New Jersey adult educators from 98 adult education programs around the state. The primary objective of the project was to develop a competency-based adult reading management system that would allow program completers to achieve the following goals: continue their education, get a job, understand their legal rights and responsibilities, improve their parenting skills, obtain a drivers license, and prepare their income taxes. Based on data from a survey of adult educators in the state and a field-test process that involved the administration of the Adult Interest Assessment Processes to 613 students from throughout the state, project staff developed a program entitled the Competency-Based Adult Reading Management System. Components of the system included a series of adult interest assessment processes, adult competency assessment tests, an adult reading skills array, a computerized prescription-generation program, and a student recordkeeping system. Data from pre- and posttests administered to program participants in the Reading Management Program showed evidence of the achievement of four of the six objectives. (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED247410

NJARP

F.Y. '80--F.Y. '84 FINAL REPORT

"The Soul of a New System"

[Lynn Klem]

Office of Adult Continuing Education
Glassboro State College
Glassboro, N.J. 08028

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

K Clay

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CE039440

NEW JERSEY ADULT READING PROJECT

The New Jersey Adult Reading Project

Final Report

F.Y. '80—F.Y. '84

"The Soul of a New System"

The progression of theory to research to practical application to impact evaluation to dissemination is a sequence which although logical, is frequently unrealizable for adult educators.

Committed to the philosophy of competency-based adult education, the Divisision of Adult Education of New Jersey has awarded 310 funds for five consecutive years to the New Jersey Adult Reading Project to implement such a process.

This paper states a theory, briefly reports on the research, describes the system developed and explains the evaluation and dissemination processes, all of which grew out of such a commitment.

As a state project, the importance of the involvement of New Jersey's adult educators can not be minimized. To date, more than 500 New Jersey adult educators from 98 of the states' 157 adult education programs have participated in at least one phase of the development of the competency-based adult reading management system.

THEORY

In 1979 a task force of New Jersey adult educators was formed to develop a concept paper on competency-based adult education (Ciccariello et al. 1979).

That paper begins with the following statement:

> "Competency-Based Adult Education (CBAE) involves the adult learner in a personalized educational process which emphasizes the achievement of demonstrated outcomes significant to each individual learner, now and in the future. The personalized educational process focuses on learning basic skills within the context of the adult's interests, needs and personal goals. Individual learning programs, developed cooperatively with the adult learner and the adult education staff reflect the educational needs of the student in communication (reading, writing, speaking, listening) and computation as these skills apply to the expressed goals and interests of the student. In addition to basic skills and relevant information, the student may need to develop process skills such as problem solving, interpersonal relations, etc. Ultimately the success of the learner's program is measured by the actual demonstration of learning outcomes in real situations. The demonstration of learning outcomes does not isolate the measurement of skills and knowledge, but integrates the skills and knowledge into specific performance tasks."

The N.J. Adult Reading Project was funded to develop a system to assist adult educators in changing this statement from a concept to a reality.

RESEARCH

It was the contention of the N.J. Adult Reading Project that prior to the development of an instructional system, or any of its components, the developers must be cognizant of the ambient factors which would affect the implementation of that system.

The goal of the N.J. Adult Reading Project was the development of a competency-based adult reading management system. It was apparent that the value of this system for New Jersey adult education programs would be proportionate to the facility with which it could be implemented in these programs. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to determine: reading instructional practices among adult educators, factors which might act as constraints in the implementation of a competency-based adult reading management system, components of competency-based adult reading instruction which were already in place, types of new products needed and areas of necessary professional development.

As it was the teachers in adult education programs who would be using the products developed by The N.J. Adult Reading Project, consideration of their input was essential and obtained at each stage of the development process.

The results of the needs assessment (Klem, 1980) indicated that New Jersey's adult education teachers believed that their programs should utilize a competency-based approach to instruction but that they lacked resources which would enable them to do so.

Among the items which appeared with the highest frequency on their "wish lists" were: information concerning competency-based adult reading materials, an adult reading skills array, and instruments which would assess adult interests, competencies and reading skills.

In addition to surveying adult education teachers, it was of paramount importance to ascertain the goals of New Jersey's adult education students. This was accomplished during the field-testing of the Adult Interest Assessment Processes developed by the N.J. Adult Reading Project.

Fifty-six of New Jersey's adult education programs participated in the field-testing process and utilized the Adult Interest Assessment Processes with 613 students. The results were compiled by the N.J. Adult Reading Project and identified the following student goals (in order of frequency)

1. To get a G.E.D.
2. To continue education
3. To get a job
4. To understand legal rights & responsibilities
5. To improve parenting skills
6. To obtain a drivers license
7. To prepare income taxes

Goals #2-7 were used as the basis of developing Competency Assessment Tests. Goal #1 was deleted from the competency-based adult reading management system because of New Jersey Adult Education Programs' proven successes in meeting this student goal.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Based upon the philosophy of competency-based adult education and the results of the statewide adult education needs assessments, The New Jersey Adult Reading Project has developed a Competency-Based Adult Reading Management Management System. The components of this system include:

*Adult Interest Assessment Processes (designed to assist students in identifying their goals)

*Adult Competency Assessment Tests (designed to identify the reading skills and competencies adults need to develop to meet their goals)

*An Adult Reading Skills Array (a listing of the skills needed for reading)

*A computerized prescription generation program

*A student record keeping system

Although some components of this system can be used in isolation, the components are designed to be used in conjunction with each other.

This Competency-Based Adult Reading Management System is based on the premise that the instructional program of each student should be designed in consideration of the student's goals and interests.

Many adult education programs are currently organized to provide instruction in an individualized manner. However, individulization frequently consists of a continuum of educational activities which adults are "plugged into"

based upon their score on a reading test. An adult student functioning in this type of an individualized program proceeds at his or her own rate through a preset series of educational activities until he or she achieves a specific score on an exit test.

This Competency-Based Adult Reading Management System provides an alternative to the individualization approach as described above. The implementation of this system provides each adult student with a personalized educational program based upon his or her own goals.

A process has been designed for adult educators who choose to utilize the Competency-Based Adult Reading Management System. The process is based upon each adult's stated goals. The adult's goal can be identified through counseling or by administering one of the Adult Interest Assessment Processes developed by the N.J. Adult Reading Project.

Once the goal has been determined, the student selects one of the Competency Assessment tests related to that goal. Each test is designed to measure the reading skills involved in the particular competency being addressed. All items are keyed to specific reading skills from the Adult Reading Skills Array.

Utilization of the computerized prescription generation program, PREP, provides the instructor with a delineation of each of the reading skills (taken from the Adult Reading Skills Array) involved in the particular competency, the

words which will probably be encountered in reading matter pertaining to the competency, and the titles, sections or pages, and ordering information of instructional materials pertinent to each student's goals, interests and reading skill development needs.

The implementation of the Competency-Based Adult Reading Management System is one way to provide each adult student with a personalized, competency-based, instructional reading program.

EVALUATION

Throughout the development of the competency-based adult reading management system, advisory committee input, as well as teacher and student input were utilized to evaluate each of the system's components.

The New Jersey Adult Reading Project staff and/or adult educators acting as consultants would develop a specific piece which had surfaced as a need from the statewide teachers' needs assessment. That piece would be presented to the to the advisory committee. Based upon feedback from the committee, the piece would be revised before being given to teachers.

Teachers were presented with each new piece at statewide workshops and conference sessions and offered the materials in return for their agreement to to use the piece with their students and complete and return attached evaluation sheets.

The evaluation sheets were analyzed and used as the basis for further revisions.

The piece was then presented again to the advisory committee for final approval or further comment. Only after the piece received final approval from the advisory committee was the piece distributed to teachers in final form.

After all pieces of the system had been developed, field-tested, and approved, the competency-based adult reading management system was ready for its final evaluation.

In order to test the assumption that use of the competency-based adult instructional management system would increase students' performance on real life competencies, sixteen programs throughout the state of New Jersey who volunteered to participate in an experimental program were utilized in the evaluation process. These sixteen programs were assigned to either an experimental or control group using stratified random sampling procedures. The total system was implemented in the experimental group consisting of eight adult education programs. The eight other adult education programs were used as the control group and received only six competency assessment tests with none of the supportive pieces.

A pre-test/post-test non-equivalent control group design was established in which participants and staff of both experimental and control groups believed they were participating in a new experimental program. Competency Assessment Tests were used as the pre and post measures of participant achievement in the program.

The design was developed in conjunction with an independent third party evaluator. Project staff implemented the design and collected all data. Analysis and interpretation of the data was conducted and verified with the assistance of the independent third party evaluator.

Six measures of achievement were used corresponding to six program outcome objectives. These were: reading the Federal Financial Aid Booklet, using the Going to College in New Jersey Directory, reading the yellow pages, reading the help wanted ads, completing job applications, and reading technical texts. These Competency Assessment Tests were competency-based measures with good face and content validity as judged by an advisory committee of experienced adult educators. Internal consistency reliabilities, using Cronbach's alpha, were obtained respectively for these C.A.T.s as follows: Financial Aid (.63); Colleges in New Jersey (.73); Yellow Pages (.60); Help Wanted Ads (.86); Job Applications (.80) and Technical Texts (.93).

Mean scores for both pre and post tests on each CAT (measure) are presented in Table 2 together with sample sizes for experimental (E) and control (C) groups and pre/post difference scores (diff.). On all measures, the gain from pre to post for the experimental group exceeded markedly the gain for the control group. The size of the differential in pre/post gains between groups as well as consistency with which the experimentals out-perform the respective controls, provides supportive evidence of program effectiveness in itself.

The data was further analyzed through use of repeated measures analysis of variance. The approach consists of considering differences between the pre-test and post-test measures as constituting a within subjects factor in repeated measurements. The comparison of the treatment group with the control group would be considered between groups factor in this analysis. The major result of interest therefore, is the interaction of treatment conditions with comparison groups. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 2. The F-value and significance level shown in the table are for the repeated measures analysis of variance.

Table 2

Measure	Group	N	pre-test mean	post-test mean	diff.	F	Sig.
FA	E	3	18.67	22.00	+3.33	13.69	.01
	C	7	20.29	21.14	+ .85		
CNJ	E	3	14.00	14.67	+ .67	1.40	N.S.
	C	7	12.14	11.71	- .43		
YP	E	4	9.25	11.75	+2.46	8.08	.01
	C	14	9.50	9.93	+ .43		
HWA	E	7	16.14	20.29	+4.15	5.43	.03
	C	14	16.57	17.14	+ .57		
JA	E	6	10.00	12.17	+2.17	1.22	N.S.
	C	14	9.64	10.21	+ .57		
TT	E	9	19.22	22.11	+2.89	12.54	.01
	C	7	20.71	21.14	+ .43		

As can be seen by the table, results on the Competency Assessment Test analyses show evidence of the achievement of four of the six program objectives specified and are an indication of program effectiveness.

Dissemination

Consistent with the underlying belief of Competency Based Adult Education (Don't do unto others what they don't want done to them!), The New Jersey Adult Reading Project developed its system in total consideration of the goals, interests and needs of adult educators as well as adult students. More than 500 New Jersey adult educators participated in at least one phase of the system's development.

This involvement throughout the project's development, paved the way for its dissemination. During F.Y. '84, 28 of New Jersey's adult education programs bought the system at the cost of reproduction.

Future adoptions are anticipated and project staff has conducted "Trainer/Training" workshops for prospective training consultants.

The new Jersey Adult Reading Project staff also engaged in a variety of activities concerned with disseminating the project's design to California, Texas, Wisconsin and Maryland.

At present, The Office of Adult Continuing Education at Glassboro State College is marketing the system in-state on a cost-recovery basis. Future plans include national marketing of the system by the college or through a commercial publisher.

Summary

"The tension between ideas and applications—the word and the world—will be at the heart of everything that follows."

—Jonathan Kozol
Prisoners of Silence

Because this project has been competency-based (both in terms of the process utilized in its development and the resultant system) it will never exist in static form.

However the resources and processes now exist to enable all adult educators to "build their own systems" based upon their students' interests, goals and needs and the realities of the environments in which they live.

The competency-based adult reading management system developed by The New Jersey Adult Reading Project can be adopted by programs as it exists or be adapted for local use.

The system demonstrates the fact that adult education programs can be personalized as well as individualized and that teaching "coping skills" need not be segregated from teaching basic skills.

REFERENCES

Campbell, Donald T. and Julian C. Stanley. Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research, Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1963.

Ciccariello, Bruno, et al. "Competency-Based Adult Education: An Organized Approach to Effective Programming in New Jersey", New Jersey Bureau of Adult, Continuing, Communinty Education, Trenton, New Jersey, 1979.

Klem, Lynn. "Report on ther Needs Assessment of New Jersey A.B.E. and G.E.D. Teachers", Glassboro State College, Glassboro, New Jersey, 1980.